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NOC BRIEFING

September 1956

SOVIET INTERESTS IN ANTARCTICA

I. The _____ sq. mi. Antarctic continent, permanently ice-covered, barren and hostile, has been an area of limited interest to the world powers since its discovery in 1772.^{*} Exceptions to this general lack of interest include explorers, some scientists (particularly geologists, geophysicists, meteorologists and oceanographers), and the maritime nations (notably _____)

** Cook's circumnav.*

whose whaling fleets have cruised the forbidding Antarctic coast regularly since _____ (in 1955, _____ factory ships and _____ catchers, ~~the coast of Antarctica~~ ^(OR # _____ WORTH OF) flying the flags of _____ nations, "harvested" _____ ~~tons of~~ whale in Antarctic waters).

A. Other exceptions to this lack of interest, whose motivations range from national pride, through geographic propinquity, to hard-handed geopolitics, include ⁹ ~~THE~~ **THE GOVERNMENTS OF :**

1. Argentina and Chile - - (insert motivation)
2. Australia and New Zealand - - (insert motivation)
- and France
3. The UK - - (insert motivation)

and;

4. The US and the USSR.

B. Soviet activity in the Antarctic dates from _____, and has included the following:

1. Historically, Russian interest in the area stems from the ~~X~~ (VON BELLINGSHAUSEN (1819-21) AT ALEXANDER I'S DIRECTION) exploratory voyages of _____ a period which put _____

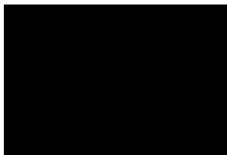
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Russian place-names on the Antarctic map.

2. Approved For Release 2001/08/14 : CIA-RDP79R00890A000800010014-3
However, active Soviet exploration and settlement _____

Antarctica did not begin until last winter (the Antarctic "summer").

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II. This Soviet Antarctic push began with the arrival of the TRANSPORT 06 AND THE RESEARCH VESSEL LENA IN ONE at on 5 January 1956. Before the last of three such

Soviet vessels departed _____ on 18 March 1956, the USSR had delivered to the frozen continent 355 scientific and support personnel, 40 vehicles, six aircraft (ranging from _____ to _____) and over 8,000 tons of provisions, housing equipment and fuel.

A. TWO permanent bases were established, at ONE THE COAST, NAMED "MIRNY" AFTER ONE OF BELLINGHAUSEN'S SHIPS, AND THE OTHER _____ MILES INLAND, NAMED PIONERSKAYA (_____). and _____ with winterproof housing for _____ people and a total of _____ barracks, _____ laboratories, and _____ scientific installations.

1. When the last of the Soviet ships left MIRNY, 92 Soviet scientists, technicians and aides remained behind, to "winter over" until the arrival of the next supply expedition (due in _____, 1957).

B. A description of these permanent bases gives some measure of the USSR's wholehearted support of this Antarctic effort.

1. Mirny (translation) - - the main base - - is located at _____ (see map). It can accommodate 100. There are _____ barracks, three laboratories, five scientific _____. ____ of the USSR's six Antarctic aircraft are located there; as are _____ of the 40 vehicles. Its winter complement numbers _____. The work to be done at Mirny includes

2. Vostok (translation) - - to be the South Geomagnetic Station during the 1957-1958 International Geophysical Year (IGY) - - is located at _____. It can accommodate _____. There are _____ barracks, _____ laboratories and _____ scientific _____.
NOT YET ESTAB?

3. Pionerskaya ("Pioneer"), an interior base, is located ~~nearly~~ ²
~~250 miles inland from Vestek~~, at an altitude of 9,000 ft. (map).

It was established by a combination of air-lift sledge-train
and can accommodate _____. Its buildings include

and its winter complement numbers _____.

It boasts a _____ ft. airstrip. With the establishment of
Pionerskaya, the USSR is able to claim the first interior
scientific station in the history of the Antarctic.
its

III. From ~~their~~ arrival in January 1956 to the present, the Soviet
Antarctic expedition has accomplished the following work:

A. Air mapping:

B. Marine charting:

C. Ground reconnaissance and mapping:

D. Geophysics (including _____, _____, and _____):

E. Oceanography:

F. Meteorology:

IV. IN GETTING THIS WORK DONE, THE SOVIET EXPEDITION HAD ITS SHARE OF DIFFICULTIES:
A, B, C, D, ETC.

revise
IV. In the process, the Soviet expedition ^(HAD FLAUN.) _____ miles, covered
~~NONETHELESS, BY THE SEASON'S END,~~
_____ miles on the ground, cruised _____ miles of seacoast and
put Russian names to _____ Antarctic terrain features ~~(as was made~~
~~evident on the new maps of Antarctica they distributed with a lavish~~
~~hand at the July 1956 Paris meeting of the IGY Antarctic Conference).~~

A. Motivated ^{WITH} perhaps as much by the canniness of practical geopoliticians ^{as}
~~as by the zeal of explorers,~~ the Soviet scientists also held four

ceremonial flag-raising, and deposited duplicate records in flag-marked cairns at two other points (map).

B. As a footnote to this, _____, Chairman of the Soviet Academy of Science's "Council on Antarctic Research", in March 1956, made it a point to emphasize:

1. Initial Russian discovery of Antarctica;
2. Antarctica's importance "in a strategic aspect";
3. Soviet "rejection" of the so-called "Sector" principle of various national claims to Antarctic territory; and
4. Soviet insistence on a voice in any international division of Antarctica.

IV. It is noteworthy that all the Soviet activity here detailed has taken place before the official start of the International Geophysical Year (1957-58). During the IGY, the USSR plans even more ambitious undertakings.

- and perhaps seven
- A. Six/permanent stations will be established (v. 3 in 1956);
 - B. Fifty or sixty "mobile" stations will be set up (v. 4 in 1956);
 - C. On-the-ground reconnaissance is envisioned, from coast to Pole, along a 1,000-mile stretch of coastline (from 70 to 105E; see map).

(insert D.)

D. Finally, some Soviet scientific detachments will remain in

Antarctica even after the close of the Geophysical Year (date —).

D. The scientific program (which, even in 1956, embraced a number of studies outside the scope of the IGY program) envisions research in _____, _____, _____ and _____: activities which no other IGY participant in Antarctica will pursue.

dimensions of this
VII. In view of this ambitious Soviet plunge into the Antarctic continent, the question of motivation arises.

The obvious motivation is economic: the USSR already has an Antarctic whaling fleet of _____ vessels, whose annual catch is valued at some \$ _____.

1. In 1956-57, _____ new vessels are to be added to this fleet, and _____ additional whalers are presently under construction.

2. One(?) report states that the USSR's ^{NEW} atom-powered ice-breaker, under construction since _____, will cruise Antarctica in 1957, possibly as part of the IGY program and possibly in conjunction with commercial whaling activities.

Q. SUCH USE OF SOVIET ICE-BREAKERS WOULD TAKE ADVANTAGE OF

THE SLOTT OFF-SEASON, SINCE THEIR

ice-breakers, whose primary mission is maintenance of the

Northern Sea Route during their annual _____ to _____ season

of navigability.

B. A second motivation combines economic and geopolitical considerations, as follows. At present, despite a number of national claims to "sectors" of Antarctic territory (which the USSR opposes in principle), no nation actually has any idea of what it might possess -- in the way of ores and minerals of economic value -- if its "sector" claim was honored.

1. The USSR's heavy emphasis on geologic surveying by its IGY expeditions means that the Soviets have a good chance of knowing what, if anything, of economic value underlies the _____ ft. ice-cover in their area of activity.

2. Thus, any claims the USSR may make, in an eventual partition of Antarctica among the powers, are likely to be based on knowledge rather than speculation.

3. There are other fringe benefits which the USSR will derive from its expeditions: know-how on cold weather operations, testing of high-latitude surveying and navigation techniques, and the like. All of these will ^W the USSR's extensive exploitation of its own resources.

An effort far in excess of that required by the glaciological program of the IGY) has applicability outside the realm of pure science.

1. Taken in combination with similar research in progress in the Soviet Arctic, these findings are likely to provide Soviet Scientists with refinements in knowledge of the size and shape of the earth of a substantially higher order than those available to Western scientists.

2. Applicability of such refined data to the problem of long-range guided missile operations would, of course, give the USSR a substantial advantage in this field of warfare.

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